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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the nature and challenges of a triple threat in childhood--economic poverty, limited and non-English proficiency, and a handicapping condition. Special emphasis is placed on the problems of Asian and Pacific Americans. Difficulties in establishing the precise scope of the problem are noted, including limited definitions and questionable statistics. Effects of the three conditions on prerequisite skills in cognition, motivation, appropriate behavior, and English ability are considered. Effects of the three conditions on educability are analyzed. The need for policy and basic research on the problem is stressed, and topics for such research are suggested. (CL)

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LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING, HANDICAPPED, AND POOR: TRIPLE THREAT IN CHILDHOOD

Kenyon S. Chan

Mark Lum is five years old. He lives with his father, mother, two sisters, and a brother. Mark's father is an unemployed cook, and his mother works part-time as a clerk in a small Chinatown store. Both parents came to the United States ten years ago and speak no English. Mark is a handsome child but doesn't get along well with other children. His mother says that he acts like a baby and doesn't talk very much. His kindergarten teacher says that he may be emotionally disturbed, but she can't tell because she doesn't speak Chinese. Mark is non-English speaking, handicapped, and economically disadvantaged. What will the educational system do with him?

Susie Kim is four years old. Susie lives with her mother, father, and baby brother. Her family immigrated from Korea when she was two months old. Her father works as a gas station attendant, and her mother sometimes does piecework for a local garment factory. Susie appears to be a happy child and seems to get along well with everyone. Susie, however, is mentally retarded. She has not yet learned any effective communication system. Susie comes from a non-English speaking, economically-limited home, and is handicapped. What kind of educational service will she be given? What language should she be taught?

The complexity of American education grows each day. As America reaches for economic and social equity through education, the educational system has become inncreasingly sensitive to the myriad of individual differences children present at the classroom door. We can no longer satisfy the demand for education with one curriculum or one method of education. We have rightly rejected unequal educational enterprises and have sought social equity for all citizens through educational innovations and modifications.

During the past two decades, American education has responded to the inequities faced by disenfranchised groups, which include ethnic minorities, limited English-speaking citizens, handicapped individuals, economically disadvantaged citizens, and females. In response to the political efforts by many special interest groups and legal precedents

set by court decisions, educational policymakers have designed a number of programs for social intervention that are aimed at combating inequities in schools. Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, Public Law 94-142--The Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975, and the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 are landmark federal commitments to the educational development of the economically disadvantaged, handicapped, and limited or non-English speaking children, respectively. Taken separately, each of these acts and related court decisions focus on the problems of particular, presumably definable, target populations. Each act responds to a social injustice and benefits a particular special interest group. Some have suggested that the responses have been rather inept. (Bowles & Gintis, 1974; Epstein, 1977; AIR, 1978) or misleading (De Lone, 1979; Jencks, 1972). Unfortunately, after millions of dollars and decades of intense activity, the plights of disenfranchised groups are not much better than before.

Many social researchers and policymakers, however, now realize that some social inequities reflected in our schools are not products of single or unidimensional factors, but are intricably linked by numerous contributing factors. Many economically disadvantaged children are limited English-speaking. Many limited English-speaking children or economically disadvantaged children may also be mentally retarded or emotionally disturbed. None of these three conditions precludes the others. Thus, the <u>triple threat</u> in childhood--economic poverty, limited and non-English proficiency, and a handicapping condition--may be among the great challenges of the 1980s.

The purpose of this paper is to outline the scope of this challenge and to discuss the impact of the triple threat in childhood on educational development. Special attention is paid to the problem of Asian and Pacific Americans.

Scope of the Problem

It is difficult to detail the precise scope of the problem being addressed in this paper. After an exhaustive search of government publications and personal contact with key government data gathering organizations, it is safe to say that the number of children who face the triple threat of poverty, minority language background, and a handicap is not known.

The three most prominent educational data gathering organizations in the government are the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), and the Bureau of Census. NCES is charged with the task of collecting, analyzing, and disseminating statistics on the conditions of education in the United States and other nations. The OCR monitors complaints in the civil rights area including education. OCR annually conducts the Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Survey. The Census Bureau is not only responsible for the Dicennial Census of Population and Housing but regularly reports surveys on specific topics related to the state of the population. Each of these organizations collects information relevant to part of our concern but none has examined the interactions among these factors.

There are at least two reasons why data on triple threat children are not available. First, and most simply, federal data gathering organizations have not been authorized to collect such data. The OCR has been requested to monitor racial and sex discrimination in the schools and has investigated the problem of the over-representation of minority children in programs for handcapped children. NCES, under congressional mandate and in cooperation with the Census, has surveyed the number of limited English-speaking persons in the United States and has analyzed the characteristics of limited English-speaking school-aged populations. Finally, the Census regularly reports on the general well-being of the nation. Secondary analysis of Census data has yielded

social indicators of equality for minorities and women. None of these organizations, singularly or in combination, have been authorized to survey the intersection of the three variables examined in this paper.

A second difficulty in collecting data on the intersection of poverty, level of English proficiency, and handicapping conditions comes from the definitional and conceptual problems inherent in each variable. While researchers and social policymakers use these concepts regularly, it must be recognized that definitions of these concepts are quite ambiguous and open to social and political influence. A discussion of each factor will illustrate the definitional problems more clearly.

Limited-English or Non-English Speaking (LES/NES). It is difficult to determine the definition and number of LES/NES children in the United States. Much research has been devoted to the problem of the assessment of LES/NES children (Oakland, 1977). In fact, many of the companion papers in this volume directly address the problem of finding and assessing LES/NES children.

The best estimates of language minority populations come from surveys conducted by NCES. From information collected in the 1976 Survey of Income and Education conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, NCES estimated the number of persons living in households in which languages other than English are spoken or those who have mother tongues other than English. This was defined as a person of any age ". . . whose usual or second language is not English or if over 14 years of age, whose mother tongue is other than English whether or not they usually speak English" (NCES, 1978b; emphases added). It should be noted that this ambiguous definition does not include any notion of language proficiency or competence but rather only focuses on whether or not a language other than English is heard. Even with these limitations the NCES data provides the best estimates of LES/NES populations.

Estimates of various Asian American populations and language statistics can be found in Table 1. These 1976 statistics suggest that the majority of Asian Americans live in non-English speaking households. Naturally this varies by Asian ethnic group and reflects the immigration history of each group. The percentage of non-English speaking backgrounds ranges from approximately 40 percent of Japanese Americans to 90 percent for the Vietnamese. These population and language statistics do not reflect the recent word choice of Indochinese refugees which may add an additional 250,000 new residents, most of whom come from non-English speaking backgrounds.

It should be noted that data are not available on Pacific Islanders, including Samoans, Hawaiians, Tongans, and those from the Micronesian Trust Territories. The migration of Pacific Islanders to the United States mainland is growing rapidly. It must also be recognized that the United States holds legal responsibility for many Pacific Island groups and that these islands (e.g., American Samoa and the Trust Territories of Micronesia) are American protectorates. These territories must me[illegible] U.S. Educational standards and are eligible for educational and other [illegible]cial and governmental services. For the most part, Pacific Islanders will, more likely than not, come from non-English speaking backgrounds.

A consideration of the population and language statistics for Asian American groups suggest that limited or non-English proficiency may be a significant obstacle to equal opportunity for these groups. The absolute number of Asian persons from non-English speaking backgrounds (1 3 million) would appear to present social planners with a major problem. However, in relative terms, the total Asian American population makes up less than 1% of the nation and therefore is easily ignored.

Poverty. Poverty status is among the most devastating variables in American life. Definitions of income and poverty status are

TABLE 1.

SUMMARY OF ASIAN AMERICAN POPULATION AND LANGUAGE STATISTICS [1]

(in thousands)

Item	Asian Ancestry	Specific Group				
		Japanese	Chinese	Pilipino	Korean	Vietnamese
Estimated Total Population	2,057	620	578	554	175	129
U.S. Native Born	879 (43) [2]	454 (73)	194 (34)	186 (34)	35 (20)	9 (7)
Foreign Born	1,179 (57)	166 (27)	383 (66)	364 (66)	140 (80)	127 (93)
In Asian Language Households	1,361 (66)	245 (40)	462 (80)	397 (72)	134 (77)	116 (90)
Asian Usual Individual Language	599 (30)	88 (14)	242 (42)	123 (22)	69 (40)	77 (60)
School-aged Persons with Non-English Backgrounds	301	40	81	103	31	46

[1] Sources: 1976 Survey of Income and Education. U.S. Bureau of the Census and National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES Bulletins #78B-5 and 79B-12)

[2] Percentages in parentheses

Note: details may not add to total shown because of rounding

controversial and less than exact (Rose, 1979). Government statistics generally provide underestimations of poverty levels. Calculations of the poverty line are based on an estimate of the cost of feeding a family multiplied by three. The government assumes that one-third of a family burden is for food leaving two-thirds for rent, utilities, taxes, clothes, medicine, and the like (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1976). Researchers have criticized this method as being a gross underestimation of the actual cost of living (Rose, 1979). The food budget for poor people is likely to be higher than the government estimate and food costs are more likely less than a fourth of the family's budget rather than a third as calculated by the government (Rose, 1979). This economic definition ignores social and psychological costs of poverty as well. Furthermore, if one were to add the costs for cultural and ethnic diversity (e.g., ethnic foods, materials, etc.) and the costs of any medical and/or psychological services for handicapping conditions to the determination of poverty and income levels, the complexities and impact of the triple threat become apparent.

Given the limitations in the official government definition of poverty, the population statistics on poverty still reveal the harsh impact of this social variable on most minority and LES/NES populations. Over 24.5 million persons were living at the poverty level in 1978 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1979). This represents nearly 11.4% of the total population. Poverty status, however, is not equally or randomly distributed across ethnic populations. In 1978, 8.7% of the White population lived in poverty, but 30.6% of the Black population and 21.6% of persons of Spanish origin lived in poverty. Recent statistics are not available for Asians and Native American populations. However, in 1975, 26% of Native Americans lived in poverty. Poverty percentages for selected Asian groups in 1975 ranged from 6% for Filipinos to 17% for Chinese (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1978).

Table 2 presents comparisons of income inequities and poverty rates for various ethnic groups. Household per capita income is defined as

Table 2

Social Indicators of Inequities in
Median Household Income and Poverty Rates[1]

All Head-of-Households	Median Household Per Capita Income[2]	Poverty Rates[3]
Am. Ind./Alask. Nat.	43% less	2.89
Blacks	48% less	3.11
Mexican Am.	51% less	2.67
Japanese Am.	41% more	0.78
Chinese Am.	11% less	1.89
Filipino Am.	10% less	0.67
Puerto Rican	50% less	3.56
Female Head-of-Households Only		
Am. Ind./Alask. Nat.	70% less	5.44
Blacks	70% less	5.11
Mexican Am.	72% less	5.11
Japanese Am.	44% less	2.44
Chinese Am.	59% less	2.11
Filipino Am.	44% less	2.22
Puerto Rican	71% less	5.44
Majority Women	41% less	2.44

[1]Source: Social Indicators of Equality for Minorities and Women, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1978 (1975 data)

[2]Read as percentage of income more or less as compared to majority males

[3]Read as X times as likely to be living in poverty as compared to majority headed households

the total available household income divided by the number of household members. This is perhaps the best measure of actual dollars available to individuals. Using majority male head of household families as a standard, the data in Table 2 indicate that ethnic households, except for Japanese Americans, make significantly less income than for the comparison group. The figures for female head-of-household families present an even bleaker picture.

Poverty rates for ethnic populations also indicate that most ethnic groups and all female head-of-households have poverty rates many times greater than majority male head-of-household families. Poverty and income data for Pacific Islanders (e.g., Hawaiians, Samoans, Micronesians, etc.) and for recent immigrant groups (e.g., Vietnamese, Koreans, Chinese-ethnic Indochinese, and Cubans) could not be found. Informal knowledge of these groups would suggest that they are highly vulnerable to poverty and low-income status.

Handicapped. The term "handicapped" refers to a range of disabilities. In the most general sense, handicapped children may be defined as children who, because of impairment of cognitive, sensory, physical and/or health functioning, require special educational and related services in order to receive an appropriate education. This definition excludes problems due to cultural or economic factors.

The Office of Special Education (formerly the Bureau for the Education of the Handicapped) estimates that approximately 8 to 12% of school-aged children are handicapped. Only 1-1/2% are so severely handicapped that they require full-time special educational services. The remainder can be educated in regular classrooms at least part time.

Categories of handicapped conditions can be roughly divided into two groups. One group includes sensory and health-related disabilities, such as hard of hearing or deaf, visually handicapped, orthopedically handicapped, and the chronically ill. The second group includes the

learning handicapped, such as educable mentally retarded (EMR), trainable mentally retarded (TMR), seriously emotionally disturbed (SED), specific learning disabilities (SLD), and speech impaired. The learning handicapped account for nearly 90% of all handicapped children and are the most difficult to define and diagnose. The specific definition and related identification and assessment procedures for learning handicapped children is quite controversial (Hobbs, 1975). The Office of Civil Rights refers to this group as judgment categories or categories in which identification and diagnosis is relatively subjective and not immune to social bias.

These judgment categories require greater subjective judgment on the part of administrators, teachers, and diagnosticians than "hard" handicapping conditions such as deafness or blindness (Killialea & Associates, 1980a). It is often noted that ethnic minorities, economically disadvantaged children and LES/NES children are over-represented in these judgment categories (Hobbs, 1975).

At present it is not known what percentage of handicapped children may be LES/NES and/or economically disadvantaged. The 1978 Elementary and Secondary Civil Rights Survey conducted by OCR has provided estimates of the number of various racial and ethnic groups in

particular judgment category programs. A summary of these data appear in Table 3 [1]

According to the data in Table 3, approximately 6.25% of the nation's children participate in programs for either EMR, TMR, SED, SLD, or speech impaired. Proportionately, American Indians and Blacks were slightly overrepresented while Hispanic, Asians, and Whites are slightly underrepresented. Examination of the percentages for specific judgment categories suggest that the greatest discrepancies appear in the EMR category, with Black students representing more than two and a half times their expected number.

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[1] For a discussion of the integrity and problems in the OCR data, see Killialea and Associates, 1980. The OCR data comes from self-reports of 6,049 school districts and all of the 54,082 schools in those districts. Particular difficulty was reported in the special education data and the yet to be analyzed LES/NES data. Ethnic groups were estimated by the district employee who filled out the form and were defined as follows:

American Indian or Alaskan native: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of America and who maintain cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition.

Asian or Pacific Islander: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, Pacific Islands, or the Indian subcontinent. This area includes, for example, China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands, and Samoa.

Hispanic: a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.

Black, not of Hispanic origin: a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.

White, not of Hispanic origin: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.

TABLE 3.

PERCENTAGE OF ETHNIC PARTICIPATION

IN JUDGMENT CATEGORY SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS [1]

Item	Total	Race/Ethnicity: American Indian	Asian American	Hispanic	Black	White
% In Judgment Groups	6.25	7.5	3.7	5.8	8.4	5.9
Educable Mentally Retarded	1.4	1.7	0.4	1.0	3.4	1.0
Trainable Mentally Retarded	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.2
Seriously Emotionally Retarded	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.5	0.3
Specific Learning Disabled	2.3	3.5	1.3	2.6	2.2	2.3
Speech Impaired	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	2.0
Gifted or Talented	1.9	0.8	4.6	1.5	1.3	2.1

[1] Source: 1978 Elementary and Secondary Schools Civil Rights Survey, Office for Civil Rights

It appears that Asians are underrepresented in these special education programs. Note that the Asian underrepresentation appears largely in the EMR and LD categories. The reported under-participation of Asian Americans in special education programs could be an artifact of inadequacies in the collection of the OCR data (see footnote), or it could reflect 1) the relatively healthy state of Asian American children, or 2) the under-identification and misdiagnosis of Asian American children accompanied by their under-utilization of special programs. If the latter interpretation proves to be true, it implies that many Asian American children with moderate learning problems are not being served. Birman (1979) suggested that this might be the case for Hispanic populations. Further research into the special educational needs of Asian American children is required to fully understand the meaning of these statistics.

Summary. From the examination of various data sources it is impossible to arrive at an estimate of the number of triple threat children in our schools. We know that approximately 6 to 8 percent of school-aged children participate in special education programs designed for one of the judgment categories. We know that approximately 10.6 million Hispanics and 1.3 million Asians are LES/NES. Hispanics and some Asian groups are more likely to be living in poverty. One could speculate that those living in poverty are more likely to be LES/NES and those who are LES/NES are more vulnerable to being in Special Education judgment categories. The data sources, however, are not comparable, and hard data on triple threat children simply do not exist. While the data presented are intriguing, the scope of the problem of triple threat children remains unknown.

Impact of the Triple Threat

The demands of schooling assume that children have acquired certain prerequisite skills before entering the formal school setting. Chan and Rueda (1979) assert that these prerequisite skills, often referred to as

"the hidden curriculum," are acquired in early childhood and influence the general educability of the child. Educational failure by low-income and minority children can be blamed, in part, on low educability. The triple threat in childhood are three factors that inhibit or are in conflict with development of these rudimentary orientations, motivations, and skills presently required by school. At least four areas of the hidden curriculum can be identified. These four areas are: 1) rudimentary cognitive skills, 2) motivation to go to school, 3) finite set of "student behaviors," and 4) command of standard English.

First, educators assume that children have developed the rudimentary cognitive skills necessary to succeed in formal educational tasks. Although there are many cognitive and perceptual tasks that one can develop (Cole & Scribner, 1979), parents may foster those that are required in the formal school setting. Left to right orientations, symbolic abstractions, reflective conceptual tempo, and memory of abstract symbols are examples of cognitive skills that children are presumed to have when entering school and which can be promoted by parents in childhood. Parents can simulate school-like tasks and encourage children to explore, analyze, and abstract their environment.

Second, educators assume that children are motivated to go to school and perform well in school. Educators also assume that children are motivated and rewarded by adult praise and are stimulated by individual accomplishments and individual pride. Prior to schooling, parents can provide successful learning experiences and may serve as motivating models. Parents can introduce children to the pleasures of reading and studying, and can communicate a posture of positive feelings toward individual achievement and individual competition.

Third, educators assume that children enter school with certain student behavior. While children may develop many behaviors, they are expected to develop a finite set of student-like behaviors before the school experience begins. Paying attention to adults, following simple

instructions, and beginning and finishing tasks are several rudimentary behaviors children are not directly taught in school, but instead are thought to develop before school.

Fourth, even with the rise and interest in bilingual education standard English continues to be a necessary requirement in school. Educators, rightly or wrongly, expect children to speak standard classroom English. Parents can foster the development of precise and complex speech by their children. For minority language groups, some researching (Gennessee, DeAvila, Troike) suggest parents should do this in the native language, rather than in English. LES parents may hinder a child's cognitive and linguistic development by using English in the home. They can also promote verbal expression and verbal abstraction. Like other aspects of the hidden curriculum, lack of standard English ability places the child at a grave disadvantage in school. While language-minority populations have argued for the right to maintain their language and cultures, recent proposed federal regulations for bilingual education clearly demonstrate the hidden requirement of standard English in school (Federal Register, 1978).

Children faced by the triple threat in childhood are at a distinct disadvantage in acquiring these aspects of the hidden curriculum. Each threat--poverty, LES/NES status, and learning handicap--plays a unique and overlapping effect on the development of educability.

Poverty. Biomedical and health studies indicate that children in poverty are sick more often and have more prolonged illnesses (Birch & Gussow, 970). Children from poverty level backgrounds often suffer from sub-nutrition which is often accompanied by sluggishness and inattentiveness (Birch, 1972). Poverty is also associated with restrictions in the socialization enrivonment (Chan & Rueda, 1979). Poverty negatively affects the kinds and amount of information available to the socializer. It negatively influences the mental health of the caretaker and restricts the availability of time and materials necessary

to acquire the hidden curriculum. Families in poverty simply do not have the money to buy materials, like books, paper, and pencils, which aid in the development of rudimentary cognitive skills and motivate the child to learn. Parents concerned with the pressures of poverty often do not have the time or knowledge to reward scholarly activities, practice school-like behaviors with their children, and develop concise, abstract standard English.

LES/NES status. Federal regulations and public school practice emphasize English language proficiency, a fact which immediately places limited and non-English speaking children in jeopardy. Most obviously, limited-English proficiency is in conflict with the standard English requirement of schooling. This was well documented in Lau v. Nichols where the Supreme Court stated ". . . there was no equality and treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from meaningful education" (Lau v. Nichols, 1974). The entire bilingual education movement is built on the requirement of standard English in the school and the reality of large numbers of LES/NES children. Yet, it is not clear if public policy considers LES/NES children in conflict with current educational standards of culturally disadvantaged. The development of bilingual programs designed to maintain one's native language and culture while gaining proficiency in English were developed in recognition of the cultural bias of the standard English requirement in schools. This approach seeks to diversify the hidden curriculum to avoid limiting the development of LES/NES children. Bilingual programs aimed at simply teaching standard English to LES/NES children can be viewed as programs aimed at remediating a disadvantage. Recent proposed bilingual regulations suggest that the government is operating from the latter position (see Federal Register, Volume 45, No. 114, July 11, 1980).

LES/NES status is accompanied by cultural difference as well. In addition to standard English, culturally diverse LES/NES children will

have difficulty acquiring other aspects of the hidden curriculum. Cognitive skills, motivations, and behaviors are common to all groups but manifest themselves quite differently depending upon the social, physical, or economic requirements of a particular setting (Cole & Brunner, 1971). Conflicts and differences arise when, as in the case of LES/NES children, learning styles or motivations required in their home and culture are different from, or in conflict with, those required by school. Problems in performance for LES/NES children may be the product of language differences and/or a product of conflict of psychological development in one setting and the prerequisites of school.

A few examples of cultural conflicts may clarify this point. Different cultural groups have been found to solve cognitive problems differently or develop unique aspects of their cognitive repertoire (Cole & Scribner, 1974; Ramirez & Castenada, 1974). Some Hispanic and Asian groups are motivated by group affiliation and group success (Gallimore, Boggs & Jordan, 1974; Ramirez & Castenada, 1974) rather than individual achievement in competition. Finally the definitions of appropriate behavior between children and adults and children and children differ. Observers of Hawaiian children, for instance, report that child-to-child interactions are much more salient and important than child-to-adult relations (Gallimore et al., 1974; Gallimore, Tharp, & Speidel, 1973). This confuses many teachers who expect children to attempt to monitor the adult's behavior and who will often interpret a child's helping another child as academic cheating rather than appropriate peer-to-peer relations. Chan and Rueda (1978) outline these conflicts in greater detail.

Thus, it is argued that LES/NES status accompanied by cultural diversity influences the acquisition or non-acquisition of the hidden curriculum in a number of ways. Not only is LES/NES status directly in conflict with the standard English requirement of school but accompanying cultural differences may influence the acquisition of other aspects of the hidden curriculum as well. Attention only to language

proficiency in LES/NES children ignores the intricate relationship between language and culture and thus ignores the cultural conflicts between LES/NES children and the schools.

Learning handicap. Children who are learning handicapped are by definition impaired in educability. In the cognitive and language areas, educable mentally retarded children and trainable mentally retarded children will show a consistent pattern of lower cognitive functioning which preclude normal achievement. For learning disabled children the source of the learning problem is often only suspected or is left unknown. The proficiency of learning disabled children in cognitive and language skills is likely to be uneven. The emotionally disturbed child may show impairment in cognitive and langauge functioning caused by the interference of emotional or behavioral dysfunctions. The speech impaired child by definition will show impairments in language functioning but may not necessarily show impairment in cognitive functioning.

The cognitive requirements of educability are not the only aspects of the hidden curriculum affected by learning handicaps. Researchers are becoming much more aware of the importance of motivational differences in exceptional children. It appears that some learning handicapped children acquire an excessive feeling of failure and take no credit for their success (Chan & Keogh, 1974). Some researchers have also suggested that motivation to achieve in school and interpretation of success differ for learning handicapped children (Chan, 1978).

In addition to cognitive and motivational problems, learning handicapped children may have greater difficulty acquiring rudimentary social behaviors required not only in schools but also in their communities as well (Greenspan, 1979; Kitano & Chan, 1978; Rueda & Chan, 1980). It is well known that handicapped children are often rejected and isolated from their peers (Greenspan, 1979). Further it has been argued that poor social development leading to peer rejection negatively

influences educability and achievement (Greenspan, 1979; Greenwood, Walker, & Hops, 1977; Simeonsson, 1978).

It appears that learning handicap status negatively affects all aspects of the hidden curriculum. Cognitive and language areas are of major concern. Handicap status may result in lower motivation and difficulty in the acquisition and/or maintenance of social skills as well.

Conclusions

Taken one at a time we have some understanding of the effects of each of the triple threats in childhood. Taken two at a time we know something about handicapped children living in poverty but virtually nothing about LES/NES handicapped children or LES/NES children living in poverty. Finally, examining all three triple threat variables at one time, no research studies could be found. Yet, because of the pressures of reality, many programs and projects designed for bilingual handicapped children have come in recent years.

Demonstration projects, funded by the Office of Special Education (formerly the Bureau for the Education of the Handicapped) and Head Start, have been developed to accommodate handicapped children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Educators have also developed "assessment" tools to assess bilingual mentally retarded children (Spanish-speaking) (McGarth, no date). Some Title I programs have included Spanish-speaking children and handicapped children. Thus, once again necessity is the mother of invention.

Not all inventions, however, are effective or beneficial. After two decades of innovations and intervention, educators are still not certain if children are being properly placed into programs or if programs are narrowing the gap between majority and minority children. Tools to adequately assess and diagnose problems among LES/NES children

do not exist. Adequate measures of school progress and achievement for minority and LES/NES children are still under development.

Meanwhile LES/NES children continue to be three times more likely to be two or more grades below the grade level expected for their age (NCES, 1978a). Drop out rates for LES/NES children continue to be three to four times the rate for English-speaking students (NCES, 1978a). Poverty rates for minorities continue to be much higher than for majority group families (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1978). Unemployment is rising in all groups.

Policy and basic scientific research are desperately needed. Policy studies must be undertaken that recognize the overlap of social forces operating in the society. Birman (1979) provides one example of this type of study. She investigated the overlap between Title I and P.L. 94-142 (Special Education) programs. She concluded that the federal government could encourage more coordination between services and should investigate how and why some students are selected for one categorical service over another. Her unique study also provided some preliminary information on the triple overlap of Title I, P.L. 94-142, and program for LES/NES students. She suggested that LES/NES students may not be receiving special education services because teachers do not like to refer children to two service programs and because of inadequacies in the diagnostic procedures employed by school personnel. Birman raises very interesting questions requiring further research.

Basic scientific research is also needed in order to provide sound foundations for the development of intervention projects. Currently, the effects of being bilingual on the development of a learning handicapped child is unknown. Can mentally retarded children adequately learn two languages? Can Western techniques of psychotherapy be easily translated into other languages and for non-Western based ethnic groups? Preliminary research suggests that translating materials (e.g., reading books, I.Q. tests, demographic surveys) from one language to another is

quite problematic (Brislin, Lonner, & Thorndike, 1973; Mehan, 1974). Yet translating educational material and tests for LES/NES children has continued almost unchallenged.

Potential topics for policy and basic scientific research on the effects of the triple threat in childhood is limited only by the researcher's imagination. Some potential topics are listed below; the reader is encouraged to add to the list.

Social Policy and Demographic Studies

1. A national demographic study should be authorized to determine the number of children under the triple threat in childhood. Careful attention should be paid to how each aspect of the triple threat is defined and identified in the survey.

2 Small scale studies of children under the triple threat in childhood should be conducted to determine the validity of the national survey recommended above.

3. Validity studies should be conducted examining the various definitions used to identify language groups, poverty groups, and handicapping conditions. These validity studies would also aid in determining the overall validity of national surveys.

4. Demographic studies of small language groups should be conducted. Pacific Islanders and various Native American language groups are ignored by government surveys and most researchers. Yet, small population size has never been an excuse to deny equal opportunity.

5. The Birman (1979) study should be expanded to examine the triple policy overlap of programs and legislation separately designed for economically disadvantaged, LES/NES, and handicapped children. The outcome of such a study could lead to recommendations regarding funding and the need for legislative clarifications.

Recommendations for Research Study

1. Good socio-psychological and linguistic studies should be conducted on the impact of LES/NES status on handicapping conditions. LES/NES status is more a social and linguistic fact than a psychological one.

2. Assessment and diagnostic procedures should be developed and validated for LES/NES children who may be mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, and who may have other handicapping conditions.

3. Studies should be conducted examining the impact of various social and cultural factors on childhood. Perhaps large scale studies and ethnographic studies could be designed to examine the eight types of children described below.

Childhood Type	Poverty Status	LES/NES Status	Handicapped
Type 1	No	No	No
Type 2	Yes	No	No
Type 3	No	Yes	No
Type 4	Yes	Yes	No
Type 5	No	No	Yes
Type 6	No	Yes	Yes
Type 7	Yes	No	Yes
Type 8	Yes	Yes	Yes

   a. What is currently known about these eight types of children?

   b. What are the family characteristics of each type?

   c. How is each type prepared for schooling?

   d. What natural learning patterns develop in the homes and communities of each type?

   e. How does each type fit or fail to fit with the hidden curriculum?

   f. What are the educational achievement capabilities and needs of each type?

   g. What are the life outcomes of adults who come from each of the eight types?

Professional Training

1. An assessment of training needs of professionals should be conducted aimed at determining levels of competence and need for those working with children under the triple threat in childhood.

2 Teachers, psychologists, social workers, and administrators should be provided concrete information on the intricate relationships among social and cultural variables and be encouraged to develop innovative curriculum and training for themselves in this area.

3. Because of the language and cultural differences between many children and their teachers, strong parent/teacher relationships should be fostered. Parents and other community members should be encouraged to join the school's efforts to combat the triple threat in childhood.

4. Peer and cross-aged tutoring may temporarily fill the gap between number of LES/NES children to be served and language qualified teachers to serve them.

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